

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE USGA | SPRING 2021

golfjournal

AMERICA *in full swing*





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#Perpetual



JUSTIN THOMAS



HIDEKI MATSUYAMA



RICKIE FOWLER



OYSTER PERPETUAL DATEJUST 41



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Deacon Palmer served as the superintendent at Latrobe (Pa.) Country Club for 50 years.

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PHOTOS BY

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JORDAN NAHOLOWAA MURPH

FRED VUICH

Across all 50 states, Americans are united in their love of golf, from courses in rural areas to ones in cities, like Chicago's South Shore Golf Course. JOHN GRESS/USGA

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golfjournal

Official Publication of the USGA
VOLUME 58, ISSUE 1

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Published for the USGA by Golfweek Custom Media, a division of USA TODAY Sports Media Group

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Printed in the USA

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APART, *Yet Together*

by **STEVEN SCHLOSS**

I JOINED THE USGA as chief people officer seven years ago, after many years in financial services, media and the fast-paced world of start-up technology. As a lifelong golfer, the opportunity to drive transformation and continuous evolution of USGA leadership, culture, values and capabilities is a unique and meaningful experience.

Successful transformation requires respect for what matters with an understanding of the impact our decisions have on our people and those we serve to make the game more welcoming, vital and sustainable. We recognize that our roles as stewards of the game's history must be balanced with the need to be a smarter and more nimble nonprofit organization in order to inspire new pathways to grow, innovate and make an impact. I like to say the USGA is a mission-driven, 125-year-old start-up.

The past year illustrates the point. We became a distributed organization, where staff may work from any-

where – from their home, at a championship site or on our Liberty Corner, N.J., campus. We accelerated our collective growth and development by learning to adapt and respond with speed and confidence. We faced new challenges in keeping everyone safe and supported, connected, aligned, motivated and up to date.

Through it all, we remained focused on our mission to champion and advance the game. From providing COVID-19 relief funds to Allied Golf Associations, to widening our use of digital platforms and diverse storytellers, to implementing new technology for golf courses and golfers, to rapid championship-site COVID tracking and testing, we found new ways to respond to disruption while creating possibility. It is what we strive for every day, and why your USGA Membership is so important.

While we rang in 2021 with

optimism that things surely will get better – and I'm convinced they will – this year has already shown that ongoing change and disruption will again require us to respond with a level of resilience we now understand and appreciate.

Going forward, we will continue to operate as a distributed organization and evolve toward a hybrid workplace model that supports the need for greater





Course setup at the U.S. Open looked a bit different in 2020, as did many other aspects of a remote workplace.

flexibility. We will continue to develop our collective skills and capabilities as we become more “future-ready” as an organization. The new Golf House Pinehurst, slated for a December 2023 opening, will further our hybrid operating model while allowing us to get closer to customers, future Members and donors.

There is one aspect of our culture that even through change

and uncertainty we must firmly retain: how we treat each other. We care about our staff, who in turn do their best, in our values-driven way, to treat our most important stakeholders – Members, volunteers, competitors, Allied Golf Associations and colleagues from around the golf industry – with respect, care, candor and fairness. We will nurture an increasingly diverse and connected community

that in our 21st-century way of thinking and operating will serve as a foundation for ongoing success, vitality and relevance.

STEVEN SCHLOSS

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Schloss'.

USGA Chief People Officer





Trophy Hunter

BORN ON ST. PATRICK'S DAY in 1902, Bob Jones won his first of five U.S. Amateur titles in 1924, defeating George Von Elm, 9 and 8, in the 36-hole final at Merion. Jones is one of two players – Francis Ouimet is the other – to win both versions of the Havemeyer Trophy: the original (main image) and current version (above), which was created after its predecessor was destroyed in a fire at Jones' home club, East Lake, in 1925.

main photo by **GEORGE S. PIETZCKER**

1924

USGA MUSEUM

Thank You!

In a year filled with challenges and uncertainty, the unwavering support of USGA Members allowed us to continue investing in our mission to champion and advance the game. We look forward to all we can accomplish together in making golf more open for all.



For all golf is and all it can be.

MY SHOT

Plenty Good

Finally, nine-hole courses are getting the appreciation they deserve

by **ROB COLLINS**

Principal designer, King-Collins Golf Course Design

"Is this just a nine-hole golf course?" "Y'all going to build nine more holes?" "Where's the 10th hole?"

WHEN WE FIRST opened Sweetens Cove, in South Pittsburg, Tenn., back in 2014, our general manager constantly fielded questions like these. We all learned to laugh them off, convinced that they came from a place of ingrained bias rather than a commentary on the quality of the design. Sweetens Cove was meant to be an experiment in seeing what happens when you cram as much shotmaking interest, variety and strategy as possible into a mere 72-acre footprint, and we were confident that we had succeeded.

That the course now stands alongside and even above some major-championship venues on various "best of" lists is more than just a feather in its cap; it's proof that nine-holers can possess as many as or more of those aforementioned qualities than 18-hole courses. This new reality is tearing down old perceptions, as many developers and existing courses are now looking at building compelling golf on a smaller footprint to lower the price point, time commitment and maintenance costs. We've also been thrilled to see that millennials are far more likely to understand that a high-quality golf experience isn't tied to a facility's total number of holes.

Nowadays, "Let's play 9" isn't a compromise, a concession or an accommodation – it's just a welcome invitation. And if you want to play two times, or go around and around all day, hey, that's great, too.



Name the only mother-daughter tandem to each win a USGA championship, which occurred 25 years apart. (answer on Page 14)

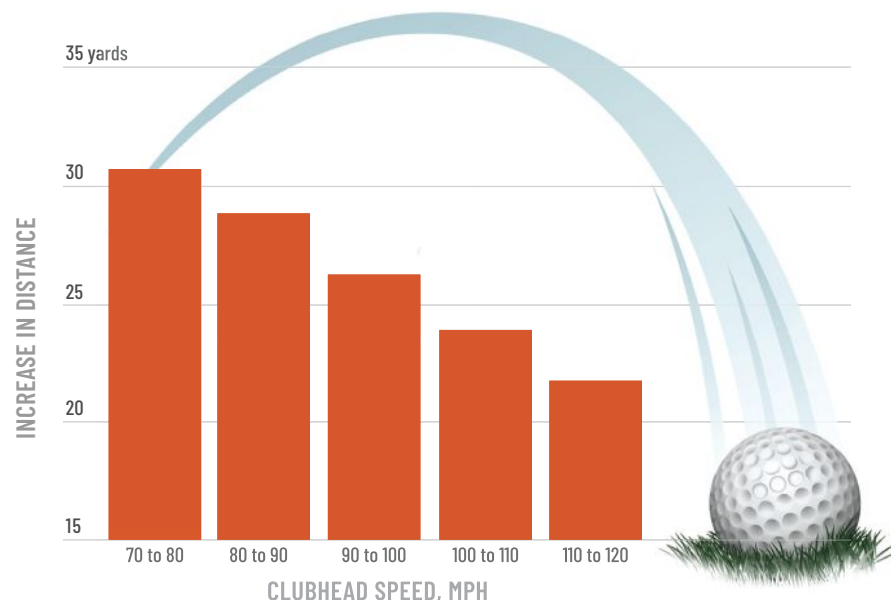
GOLF SCIENCE

What Maximizes Shot Distance?

by STEVE QUINTAVALLA

SPOILER ALERT: Golfers with higher swing speeds tend to hit the ball farther. The more energy put into the ball, the farther it goes – but how much farther? A 10-mph increase in club speed can lead to a 14-mph increase in ball speed, and a 25-yard increase in distance. There are, however, diminishing returns, which result from less efficiency as the ball is compressed more, and more wind resistance at higher ball speeds.

There are ways that skilled golfers can improve their distance without protein shakes or gym workouts. High spin creates high wind resistance that slows the ball down – old-timers will recall that wound balls hit at low angles with lots of spin would climb dramatically later in the trajectory. Lower spin means less wind resistance – good for distance – but this also leads to a lower trajectory, which can be bad for distance, as the ball won't be able to



carry as far. Increasing the angle at which the ball launches from the tee can make up for this, which may be why LPGA players strive for launch angles as high as 13 degrees.

Of course, there can be too much of a good thing: excessively high angles can lead to ballooning trajectories and shots that don't

go as far or get pushed around by the wind. Too little spin will lead to "knuckleballs," trajectories that are unstable and unpredictable, or shots that fall out of the sky. Getting these factors just right is the goal of clubhead, shaft and ball selection, as well as the use of teaching pros, launch monitors and, yes, practice!

QUOTE

"GOLF IS MY LIFE, AND I LOVE IT. I'D PLAY IT WITH ROCKS IF I HAD TO."

— Margaret Curtis, three-time U.S. Women's Amateur champion and co-founder of the Curtis Cup Match



Who Am I? I have the longest gap between 1st and 2nd USGA victories of any woman (29 years) and the longest span between first and last USGA titles of anyone (47 years). (answer on Page 15)

QUICK 9

MILESTONE MOMENTS



100 YEARS
AGO

World Golf Hall of Fame inductee Marion Hollins (left) won the 1921 U.S. Women's Amateur on Oct. 8, defeating three-time champion Alexa Stirling, 5 and 4, at Hollywood Golf Club, in Deal, N.J.



75 YEARS
AGO

Kemp Richardson was born on April 13, 1946. The two-time U.S. Senior Amateur champion (2001, 2003) and his father, John (1987 Senior Amateur) are the only father-son champions in USGA history.



50 YEARS
AGO

On Feb. 6, 1971, Apollo 14 commander Alan Shepard hit two golf balls on the moon with a modified 6-iron. The "Moon Club" is on display at the USGA Golf Museum.

25 YEARS
AGO

Kelli Kuehne won her second straight U.S. Women's Amateur on Aug. 10, 1996, defeating Marisa Baena, 2 and 1, at Firethorn Golf Club in Lincoln, Neb.



Answer: (from Page 12) **Kathy Cornelius** won the 1956 U.S. Women's Open and daughter **Kay Cornelius** captured the 1981 U.S. Girls' Junior, each earning her only USGA title.

RISING STAR

Jackson Van Paris

by **DAVID SHEFTER**

THERE ISN'T A countdown clock, nor does Jackson Van Paris need a daily text reminder. The signs are omnipresent, the buzz palpable inside the clubhouse at the Country Club of North Carolina in Pinehurst, N.C. A major event is coming this summer, and CCNC member "JVP" will be the headliner.

Van Paris, 17, is No. 250 in the World Amateur Golf Ranking® as of Feb. 3, a position that virtually guarantees him an exemption into the 73rd U.S. Junior Amateur this July at CCNC.

"A lot of my former junior golf competitors who are now in college have said, 'JVP is going to win the U.S. Junior because it's at his home course,'" said Van Paris.

Only time will tell, but few among the expanded 264-player field have his credentials. Last March, Van Paris registered his biggest win to date, the Sage Valley Invitational. It came on the heels of Van Paris helping the 2019 USA Junior Presidents

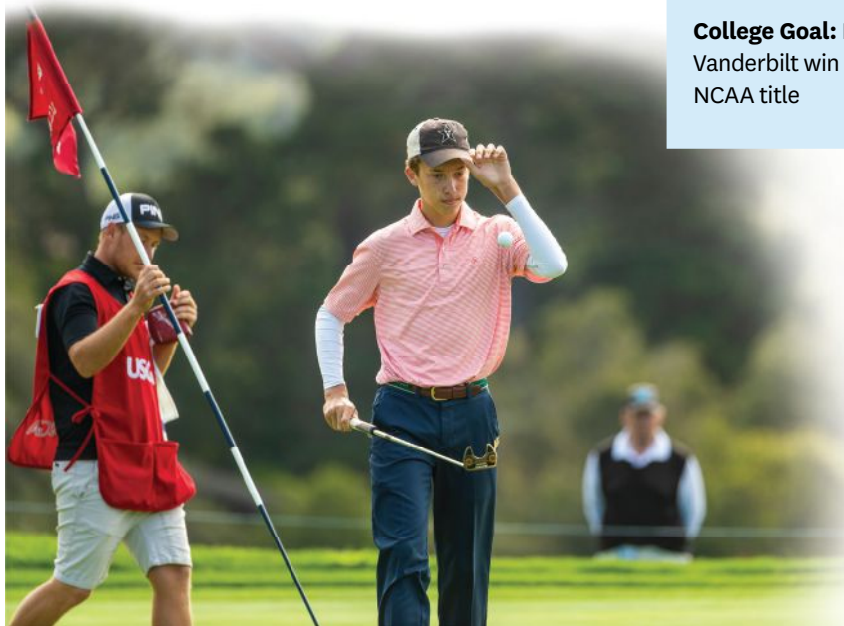
Cup Team to victory in Australia.

The world first took notice of his talent at Pebble Beach (Calif.) Golf Links during the 2018 U.S. Amateur, when Van Paris, then 14, became the youngest player since Bob Jones in 1916 to win a match. Now the attention will be more squarely on him. Playing at home can be a blessing and a curse; comforts and familiarity, sure, but also the burden of elevated expectations.

Van Paris had a trial run this past summer at the prestigious North & South Amateur just down the road at Pinehurst Resort & Country Club. He lost in the first round, but with some 50 friends and family supporting him, it whetted his appetite for the main course.

Win or lose, Van Paris plans to enjoy his final junior event to the fullest.

"The suspense is killing me," he said. "I wish it would come already."



Van Paris made history in the 2018 U.S. Amateur at Pebble Beach.

The Van Paris File

Age: 17

Hometown:
Pinehurst, N.C.

College Choice:
Vanderbilt (enrolling fall 2021)

USGA championships (best finish):
3 (Round of 32 in 2018 U.S. Amateur)

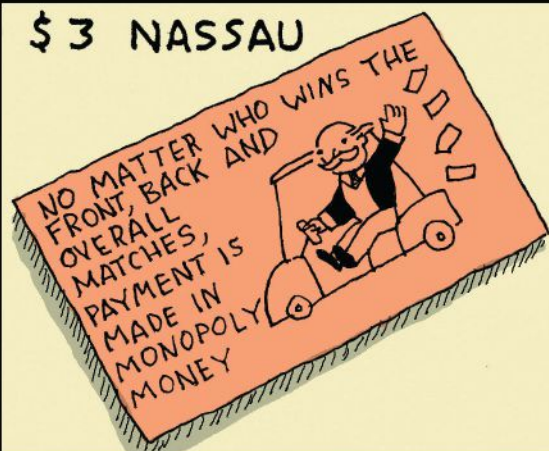
Biggest Victory: 2020 Sage Valley Invitational

College Goal: Help Vanderbilt win first NCAA title

NEW GOLF WAGERS

FRESH IDEAS FOR PLAYERS LOOKING TO SPICE UP THEIR SUNDAY GAMES

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SHEEP

A VARIANT OF WOLF, THE SHEEP TEES OFF FIRST, THEN CHOOSES

EVERYONE ELSE IN THE FOURSOME AS HIS OTHER PARTNERS, ENSURING NOTHING BUT TIES



BLAME HOMER

AS IN "HOMER" EACH MEMBER OF A THREESOME PLAYS A SIX-HOLE MATCH WITH THE IMAGINARY HOMER AGAINST THE OTHER TWO PLAYERS, ONLY INSTEAD OF HOMER'S SCORE ALWAYS BEING NET PAR, HERE IT'S A QUADRUPLE BOGEY



JOKEYS

WHOEVER TELLS THE BEST GOLF JOKE ON A GIVEN HOLE WINS \$1— AND A RUBBER CHICKEN



BINGO BANGO BUNKO

ONE FOR FIRST TO REACH THE GREEN, ONE FOR CLOSEST TO THE HOLE, ONE FOR FIRST TO HOLE OUT, AND ONE FOR FIRST TO LIE ABOUT THE SCORE



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FROM THE VAULT

The Candy Man's Bags

by **VICTORIA NENNO**

SAMMY DAVIS JR. rose from a humble start as a 3-year-old tapdancing alongside his father and uncle in their Harlem vaudeville act to a wildly successful career as a recording artist, Broadway headliner, Hollywood film star and member of Frank Sinatra's "Rat Pack" who endeared himself to audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

Nicknamed "Mr. Entertainer" for his decades-long show biz reign, Davis was also a self-proclaimed golf nut who lent his name to a tournament hosted by New Jersey's Black-owned Freeway Golf Course in 1970. The Greater Hartford Open, which has been a staple on the PGA Tour for more than 60 years, also bore Davis' name from 1973 to 1988. During the era of celebrity-hosted tournaments, such as the Bing Crosby National Pro-Am and the Bob Hope Desert Classic, Davis was the only Black entertainer connected with a PGA Tour event.

As part of its collection, the USGA Golf Museum has two golf bags that belonged to Davis and reflect his penchant for the extravagant and larger-than-life personality. The first bears a bold depiction of Gucci's distinctive logo. To say Davis was a fan of the Italian luxury brand is putting it mildly: In 1978 he was one of the first to purchase Cadillac's special edition "baby" Seville stamped with the Gucci print across its roof and interior, and he reportedly once dropped \$35,000 on Christmas gifts at Gucci's on Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills.

The other bag features a caricature of Davis' unmistakable profile wearing a trendy "apple cap" that stands out against the shiny black leather. The mononym "Sammy" emblazoned across the bag's front epitomizes Davis' fearless approach to conquering the world of show business.



Nearly one-third (**31.7 percent**) of the 1.77 million male golfers with a Handicap Index® in the U.S. have a handicap between **10.0** and **16.0**.

QUICK 9



The Furyks helped more than 5,000 local families in December.

GIVING BACK

Jim and Tabitha Furyk

by **RON DRISCOLL**

JIM FURYK REMEMBERS being surprised – and gratified – by a visit he made with his wife to a Jacksonville, Fla., school in support of the Blessings in a Backpack food-donation program.

“Tabitha and I walked in, and a couple of the kids pointed at us,” recalled Furyk, a 17-time PGA Tour winner and the 2003 U.S. Open champion. “It was cool being recognized – not as the guy who plays golf – but as the folks who help provide food for the school. An experience like that makes you want

to find ways to help more kids, because the more you get involved, the more you realize that we’re just scratching the surface.”

Furyk moved to the Jacksonville area in 1996, and the couple married and settled there in 2000. As their Jim and Tabitha Furyk Foundation marked 10 years in 2020, they announced the Constellation Furyk & Friends, a PGA Tour Champions event debuting this October at Timuquana Country Club. Furyk turned 50 in May 2020 and promptly won his first two events

“It was cool to be recognized — not as the guy who plays golf — but as the folks who help provide food for the school.”

as a member of the senior tour.

The tour event marks an important progression for the couple’s efforts in the community, which include partnerships with a dozen programs such as Habitat for Humanity and Wolfson Children’s Hospital. “Tabitha runs the foundation,” Jim noted, “and I’m proud of all the hard work that she has put into it, heart and soul.”

Tabitha has set the bar high for the new event. Having raised \$700,000 in the 10th edition of their two-day Furyk & Friends event last March, she is aiming for \$1 million in charitable contributions for 2021, thanks in part to a \$500,000 guarantee from title sponsor Constellation Energy. “The Tour explained to us that it will be a challenge to do better than break even the first year,” said Tabitha. “But I’ve told Jim and other folks, I want to make sure that all the work that goes into this means that we can do more for the charities and continue to grow it in years to come.”

For more information, visit jimandtabithafurykfoundation.com.

CATCHING UP WITH...

Lorena Ochoa

A legend of the game now helps children in her native Mexico

by **RON SIRAK** • photo by **GABE ROUX**

THERE IS MUCH about Lorena Ochoa that conjures up memories of Bob Jones. In 2010, ensconced at the top of the game, Ochoa walked away from competitive golf. She was just 28 years old – the same age at which Jones retired, right after completing the Grand Slam. In 2011, Ochoa received the Bob Jones Award, the USGA's highest honor, and six years later she joined Jones in the World Golf Hall of Fame.

A goodness of spirit also unites the two. Both left competition to put their family first, and both continued to give back to golf and society when they quit signing scorecards that mattered.

"We've been really blessed," Ochoa, 39, said by telephone from her home in the mountains an hour and a half from Mexico City. "I've been enjoying my time as a full-time mother – biking, hiking, piano lessons. It's great to have more quality family time."

Besides wanting a family – she and husband Andrés Conesa now have three children, Pedro, 9, Julia, 7, and Diego, 4 – Ochoa also



walked away from competitive golf because of her desire to help the children of Mexico. That work now happens through the Lorena Ochoa Foundation.

"I'm working on a bunch of ini-

tiatives to raise money for health, education and food," Ochoa said. "We have raised millions of pesos. It is especially important to help people outside Mexico City, in the small places."

Use of **recycled water** for golf course irrigation has increased by more than **30 percent** in recent years.

QUICK 9



The Ochoa File

Family: Husband Andrés Conesa; children Pedro, Julia, Diego

Occupation:

Head of the Lorena Ochoa Foundation

Hometowns:

Guadalajara; Mexico City

Notable accomplishments:

2017 World Golf Hall of Fame inductee; a record 158 consecutive weeks atop the Rolex Rankings

Fun Fact:

Won an NCAA-record seven consecutive tournaments at the University of Arizona in 2002



season started. Sitting in a hotel room in Singapore half a world away from her new husband, however, she realized what she was missing. On April 23 – three years after replacing Annika Sorenstam as No. 1 in the Rolex Rankings – Ochoa announced her shocking retirement.

She has since kept a hand in the game via the Ochoa Group and Ochoa Sports Management, run by her brother, Alejandro. Through the Ochoa Golf Academies, created by Lorena, Alejandro and Lorena's longtime coach, Rafael Alarcón, they hope to grow the game throughout Mexico.

Besides her children, Lorena's greatest joy is the Lorena Ochoa Foundation, launched in 2004 with La Barranca, a primary school in Guadalajara serving 240 underprivileged children. It has since added a junior high school and has

graduated nearly 6,000 students.

"For me, the foundation is the most beautiful thing that my career as a golfer has given me," Ochoa said. "Hopefully, with this we will open eyes to realize how important education is for children in our country."

Ochoa recently ended an 11-month absence from playing golf with a 27-hole outing with old friends from her junior days.

"I miss a few things, especially how close you become with your friends and caddies and being part of that big family," Ochoa said. "I miss competition and playing in the last group on Sunday. I think very often about that."

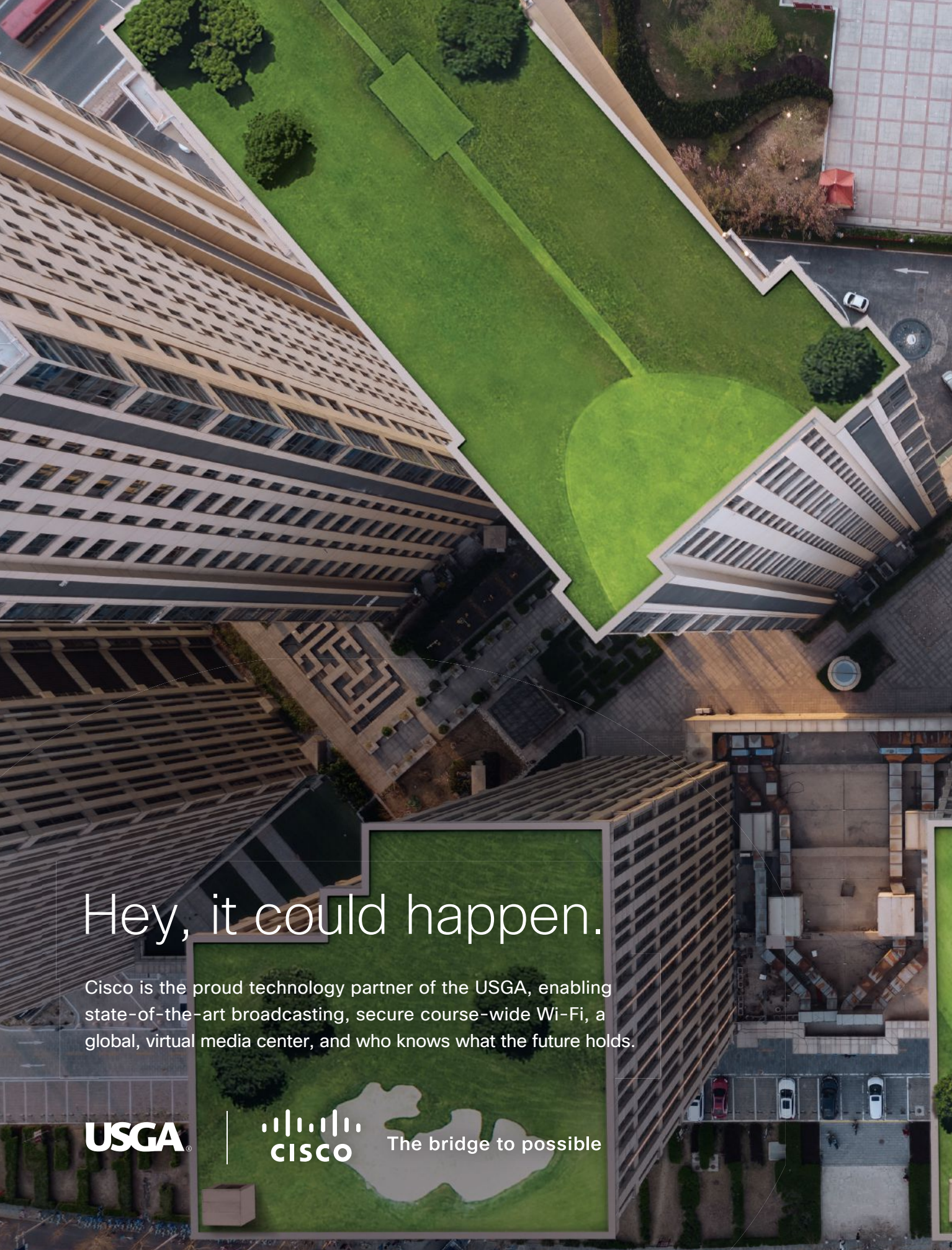
"But my life is so different right now. I'm just really happy that I had that life then, and that I have my life now," she said.

Bob Jones could not have said it better.

(Far left) Ochoa in January at Rancho Avandaro Country Club, in Valle de Bravo, Mexico; (left) Ochoa tied for second in the 2007 U.S. Women's Open; (below) receiving the 2011 Bob Jones Award.



In December 2009, the 27-time LPGA winner and two-time major champion married Conesa, the CEO of Aeromexico. Starting a family was on Ochoa's mind, but not top of mind, when the 2010



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GOLF & GOLFER

by **EVAN ROTHMAN**

photos by **DAMIAN STROHMEYER**

Comedy writer/director Bobby Farrelly, of “Dumb and Dumber” and “There’s Something About Mary” fame, is seriously in love with the game

AS SIBLING ACTS go, the Farrelly Brothers would seem to fit in neatly with frères Coen, Marx and Smothers. But there’s some Turnesa, Wadkins and Bryan brothers in there, too. And let’s not forget the Parks – Willie and Mungo. (How has there not yet been a Farrelly character named Mungo?)

Bobby Farrelly, 62, and his older brother Peter have written and directed a full field of beloved blockbuster movie comedies, including “Dumb and Dumber,” “There’s Something About Mary,” “Kingpin,” “Shallow Hal,” “Me, Myself & Irene” and “Stuck on You,” starring everyone from Bill Murray and Ben Stiller to Jim Carrey and Jack Black... with cameos by tour pros and fellow Rhode Islanders Brad Faxon and Billy Andrade. The Farrelly Brothers love them some golf, as Bobby would put it.

While Bobby pooh-

TALKING GOLF

poohs his playing ability — “We have guys at the club shooting their age, while I’m more likely to shoot my weight” — the former college hockey player competed in last year’s Massachusetts Mixed Four-Ball Championship and has been as low as a 6 handicap. Teeing it up with Hollywood stars at classic LA hot spots or with dew-sweeping “Osprey Club” pals at his beloved Country Club of New Seabury on Cape Cod, Farrelly is all about having a good time on the course... even if the game can make him as crazy as one of his film’s screwball plots.



And... action! How did you get started in golf?

My brother Pete and I were lucky enough to grow up in a family that loved golf. My mom [Mariann] is 87 and still plays a couple of times a week. My dad [Robert] was a doctor who loved himself some golf, no question. It was all about the camaraderie of his friends and

having a good time. Pete and I played as kids, but our love of golf came a little bit later, when we got older and fully realized what a great sport it is.

Q: Do you have a favorite golf scene starring your dad?

My dad was a real character — we got a lot of our sense of humor from him. One time, after a

round, we were sitting enjoying a cold beer. I said, “Pops, let me ask you something — what’s the most important thing in the world?” I was a young guy, and I actually wanted his opinion. And he said, “I would say hitting good irons.” Of course, I laughed. I said, “C’mon. It’s, like, your family, your job.” He goes, “No, way more important



The Farrelly File

Family: Wife Nancy, daughters Anna and Tiffany

Handicap Index: 9.9

Home course: Country Club of New Seabury, Mashpee, Mass.

Favorite club: Hybrid 4-iron

Best round: 72 at Malibu (Calif.) Golf Club

Favorite course: Cypress Point Club

Dream foursome: Bill Murray, Fred Couples, Larry Fitzgerald

than that – there’s no happiness unless you can pure your irons. That’s the secret to life, OK?” We laughed... but he was kind of serious. It stuck with me that golf was such a part of his life, and he passed that on to us.

Q: How about Mom?

I was 1 under and putting for an eagle on the par-5 17th, dream-

ing of shooting in the 60s, when mid-backstroke Mom cautioned me about a deceptive right-to-left break. Mind you, she’s the best putter in the family, so having read the break left-to-right, I backed off, studied it



Main photo: Farrelly at the Country Club of New Seabury on Cape Cod.
Above: Farrelly looks on as Ethel Kennedy putts during the RFK Center Celebrity Golf Fundraiser at the Hyannisport Club in Massachusetts.

TALKING GOLF

some more, then figured I'd split the difference and hit it straight. The putt did exactly what I'd originally anticipated and slid away to the right. I missed the 4-foot comebacker, then made a sloppy bogey on 18 to shoot even par. For the record, that's the one time in life Mom ever let me down. I've let her down a thousand times.

Q: When you moved out to Hollywood after college, what role did golf play in your career and your life?

When Pete and I first went out to LA, when we were writing and just trying to get things going, our golf life was somewhat on hiatus, because we couldn't afford to join a club. It was only later where I've got friends at Bel-Air and Riviera and all that. We would sneak out some weekends to an old course, Malibu Golf Club. We loved going there. Once we were making movies, we always played on the weekends. You'd work your butt off during the week, looking forward to getting to the weekend where we could play some golf with the Bill Murrays, the Greg Kinnears, the Matt Damons.

Q: Are they like everyone else and ask why you haven't made a golf movie yet?

People who know that we love golf always ask that. The short answer is because we haven't been able to figure out anything that's better than "Caddyshack," which is an all-time comedy classic. If I came up with an idea that I thought could rival it, I'd love to do it. But I haven't yet.

Q: When you do, please write a role for Cameron Diaz and bring her back to acting. She showed off such a nice swing



in "There's Something About Mary."

We had written that [driving range] scene into the screenplay. Mary's pretty much the ideal woman, almost to a laughable extent, and so of course that means she loves sports, loves to play golf, loves to drink beer, loves everything that guys like. And then Cameron says, "I don't really play golf." We were like, "That's all right. We'll figure it out." So, she takes a couple of swings. It's perfect! She had the most beautiful, natural, athletic swing. We had to work a lot more with Matt Dillon – and Matt's dad is a golf coach! Go figure.

Q: Your brand of comedy seems well suited to golf, where humiliation is always lurking.

Golf is exactly like comedy. As people have said, comedy is tragedy plus time. What better example than golf? You know you can make par or better every hole, but you don't. You don't even come close. It's always a struggle just not to humiliate yourself. But that's why it's so much fun, and funny.

Q: Yes, but you're not just a hit-and-giggle guy, right? You were a college hockey player, and Hollywood isn't for



Farrelly on set with the sweet-swinging Cameron Diaz; at work with brother Peter.



the faint-hearted.

I'm highly competitive, to a fault. I wish I wasn't sometimes. If I could fix one problem in my golf game, it's that I get frustrated. I'm always dealing with a bit of a temper out there. My brother Pete and I are both reasonable club golfers, not great golfers. But we take it very seriously in a recreational way.

Q: You and Pete have ham-and-egged it through life, on and off the course. What have you learned about being a good partner?

In the writers' room or on the golf

course, you're not going to be at your best all the time. Sometimes you feel like you're letting your partner down. But he's not going to be at his best all the time, either. It's that ding-and-dong thing, where you know everyone is trying their best, and you just have to be patient with each other and go through the ups and downs as a team.

Q: When did golf start to become a bigger part of your life?

When I moved back east, to Massachusetts, a little more than 20 years ago. I still play a bit of hockey,

but I just realized that golf is the game you can play, and play well, your whole life. I love that aspect of it. At my home club, Country Club of New Seabury, which is just a jewel, we've got a regular group of about 40 guys who go out early in the morning and have matches going on every day. We love playing Nassaus and Wolf and all that stuff, and thankfully somebody else figures out the mathematics to it all.

Q: Are you a fan of pro golf, too? Do you watch it on television?

To watch the U.S. Open or the British Open or the Masters, I can't think of any other sporting events I'd rather watch. It's so exciting but at the same time peaceful. There's something about it.

Q: "There's Something About the Majors?" Nah.

I put everything aside to watch the majors. But I like watching golf every week on TV. It's so pleasing to watch how the pros manage the same situations that we're in, to see how they get out of it, how much better they are. It's fascinating to me. 



American



*My latest book took
me on an adventure
to almost 300 courses
in search of our
shared golf soul*

by **TOM COYNE**
with **RON DRISCOLL**





Clockwise from top left: On a motorbike cart at Hawktree G.C. in Bismarck, N.D.; day's end at Big Cedar Lodge; National Golf Links of America; tall order in Texas; fair warning at Sleepy Hollow; aiming for the windmill at NGLA; hallowed history at Grover Cleveland Golf Course; joining Northwest Hickory Players in Oregon; a beacon abuts Highland Links on Cape Cod; 17-Mile Drive vista; walking the Cradle at Pinehurst; remembering the Alamo.



Dream

Tom Coyne is the author of best-selling golf travelogues *"A Course Called Ireland"* (2009) and *"A Course Called Scotland"* (2018). His latest, *"A Course Called America,"* took the self-described "ginger from Philadelphia" on an eight-month trek across the United States. Coyne talked with Golf Journal senior editor Ron Driscoll as he was putting the finishing touches on the book, which comes out in late May.

IT SEEMED TO ME that if I was going to do another *Course Called...* book and make it a trilogy, America was the obvious destination. But the fact of the matter was that I knew golf in Ireland and Scotland better than I did in my own country. I needed to explore it and give it more credit than I did in my previous books, where my love for links golf had me ignoring all the great golf in America.

I have this giant corkboard at home where I had put my map of Ireland and my map of Scotland as I planned those itineraries. It turned out I wasn't able to find a useful map of America that would fit on the board, which should have been an omen that I was in over my head. I ended up planning it on two computers – with Google Maps, a spreadsheet of courses and all the email invitations to different courses. That's one of the

photos by **TOM COYNE; GARTH REID (NGLA, 2); JEFFREY STEWART (CRADLE)**



ON GOLF

challenges of planning a golf trip in America – more than half of the places I wanted to visit, I needed a member to host me, unlike in Ireland or Scotland, where you just need a credit card.

I also needed some sort of focus, and a friend suggested I play all the courses that have hosted the U.S. Open. In playing the U.S. Open venues, I'm telling the history of golf in America, which was one of the ambitions for the book. I would be going back to Charles Blair Macdonald, covering changes in the game, the development of courses, and all the names of the game as well, because the USGA's history is the history of golf in our country.

That gave me some clarity. However, there are currently 51 U.S. Open host courses in existence, and I ended up playing 294 courses. Yes, the itinerary got a little out of control, but I didn't want this to just be a book of the top 100 courses and courses that people will never have the chance to play.

I also wanted to play munis, resorts and public courses. I wanted to visit quirky, off-the-beaten-path courses, because that's where the best stories are. Playing backyard courses, playing golf in the Navajo nation, playing municipal courses with the folks dedicated to those places – that's what I wanted the book to be about.

Divide and Conquer

The planning process took the better part of a year. Once I decided I wanted to go to all 50 states and play this broad spectrum of golf, both the number of courses and the months on the road expanded, so the itinerary ended up being about eight months. When I set off in May, I had about half of it planned down to the day, and I kept planning as I went.

I divided the country into 12 three-week chunks, so that I could get home and see my family once in a while,



A bagpiper signals sunset at Arcadia Bluffs on Lake Michigan.

recharge, do some laundry, and then fly out to another corner of the country. It was very different from the Scotland and Ireland trips, where the itinerary was set almost down to the hour beforehand.

With America, I had to go with the flow and rely on hope and guesswork. There's so much golf here that even if there was an open afternoon or a spot on the calendar, it was pretty easy to fill it. Thankfully by garnering a following on social media through my travels, there were a lot of invitations to places and people to play with. I was never wanting for a game.

In fact, it was overwhelming how many emails I got when I announced the project, people inviting me to their course. It was about pride in their golf course, and me coming to play it just might be a way to share that passion for the course they love.

One of the biggest surprises was how generous and interested people were in this sort of selfish endeavor, me wanting to play all these courses. I became the least important part of it; by people joining me or writing about it or sharing it on social media, it became their adventure and their trip. It went from this one-man quest to something more like a parade, and that was exciting and gratifying.

There were surprises everywhere I went, but I was blown away by Nebraska. I had researched and written about the linksland that's all around the British Isles and in Ireland, and I called it the best golf terrain God ever gifted us. But as I drove through Nebraska, for hour after hour, I passed some of the best golf topography on the planet. Not only there, but in the Dakotas, Wisconsin and Michigan – the shifting of the glaciers had left the same sandy deposits in America that created the game's greatest links courses in Europe, where the game was born. We have them as

well, and that was the biggest surprise to me from a golf nerd perspective.

The Big Picture

One of the book's goals, what I wanted to figure out, was this: What is the state of golf in America? That's a big question, and if you just looked at headlines or industry data, you would have one impression of golf pre-pandemic. But the impression that I got was that golf in our country is really strong – and that can't be captured by metrics. There's a change going on in terms of how people are consuming their golf.

A good example would be me putting a post on Instagram, saying that I'm going to be at a particular course at such and such time the next day, and 35 people showing up, on a weekday, to play golf. I'm not a celebrity. They're showing up because they're crazy about golf, and they want to hang out with like-minded golfers.

That happened all over the country, and not necessarily at country clubs. There's this strong community – it's online, it's younger, it's interested in cool, bespoke golf brands, fashion, technology and a pure golf experience. You see it in this wave of new golf podcasts and new golf media on YouTube; people are consuming golf differently than via the traditional model of their local country club.

That's Debatable

As with the previous books, I've been working on my lists for the back of the book. They will include my 10 favorite U.S. Open courses, best values, best short courses, my top 10 experiences overall – the places where if you said to me, "You can play anywhere you want tomorrow, where would it be?" That list isn't as obvious as some would think.

There's also the requisite list of hidden gems, along with one that will probably be the most controversial, the list of best golf states. There are only so many members to get upset about their club's ranking, but there are a lot of people who feel really passionately about their state, right? It will be interesting to get feedback on that.

I finished the trip just before Christmas 2019, a couple of months before everything shut down. As I prepare the book for publication, I read about all this travel I did and I think, did this really happen? I used to live on the road and in airports, and I haven't been

in an airport in what feels like forever.

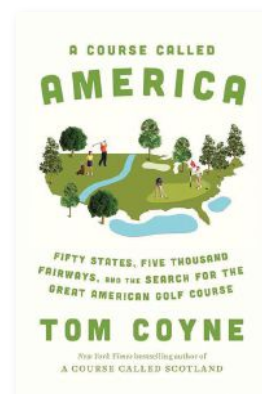
I think the book will read like a trip to a very recent past, but it will remind people of how differently and how freely we used to move around and what a gift that was. Hopefully we're back there soon, and when we are, people will remember to keep playing golf.

One of the ambitions for the trip – and the book's subtitle – is the search for the great American golf course. First, I had to figure out the characteristics of a great course. The book is a bit of an education in architecture, but it also asks, "What is quintessentially American right now? What golf experience is most evocative of what America is or what America should be?" It was a very interesting, challenging time for that question, with many opinions.

As I travel, the list of qualifications changes, but I do eventually settle on one course that to me embodies America's best ideals. Of course, I can't tell you what it is, because I want people to get to page 320. Once they find out, they will be surprised, I think, but hopefully they'll agree, once they understand the trip that took me to it. It's out there. ♦

PRIVATE ACCESS

This book makes the case, as my other books have, for more visitor-friendly golf in America, by making private clubs accessible to visitors in some capacity. It works in Scotland and Ireland, and none of these clubs would burn to the ground if say, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, visitors were allowed an hour of tee times. Lots of places have Monday charity outings, which is a way to get there, but they're usually very expensive and hard



to get into, and often you're playing a scramble, which isn't real golf. There are better ways to incorporate visitor golf into our country club model, and borrowing from the British Isles would be a great start.

A GREAT GOLF HOLE

by **FORREST RICHARDSON**

WHEN JAY MORRISH AND TOM WEISKOPF got the assignment to create TPC Scottsdale, they didn't know that the site was once a proving ground for kids on dirt bikes – nor that I was one of those kids, riding across the desert from my home a few miles away. I certainly couldn't have envisioned at the time that our desert playground would become one of golf's great spectator experiences, and home to some fantastic strategic holes.

During their long partnership, Morrish and Weiskopf were renowned for option-filled short par 4s. The 17th at TPC Scottsdale takes the cake in my book. Every shot requires choices, and it is a design each golfer must learn to play over multiple tries. It's obviously a manufactured hole, but in my view such holes deserve special recognition because they get created fully in the designer's mind.

The hole entices risk from the tee – but at great cost for a failing grade. Golfers of all abilities can try for the green from the various teeing options, but with water lapping just left of the putting surface the gamble is no bargain. Everything tends to collect into bunkers, tightly mowed hollows or the lake itself – so shots must be played with precision. The hollow in front and along the right of the green may look like a safe miss, but it is a most troublesome spot. Miss the green, and the resulting recovery shots are made tricky by the various hole locations and slopes on the massive putting surface.

To see how interesting this hole is for yourself, print an aerial image of it and draw lines from the tee to different points, and then from those points to any number of hole locations. You will begin to see the limitless possibilities – each one producing drama, challenge and excitement.

photos by **BILL HORNSTEIN** • *illustration by* **GRAHAM GACHES**



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GOLF IN

*From the coasts
to the deserts
and the plains to
the mountains,
golfers in
communities
across the
country represent
a beautiful
mosaic of the
game in the
United States*



RV LIFE

photos by

ROBERT BECK

SIMON BRUTY

EJ CARR

DARREN CARROLL

WHITNEY CURTIS

SCOTT HALLERAN

JORDAN NAHLOWAA MURPH

FRED VUICH

**Countryside RV Resort in
Apache Junction, Ariz.**

FRED VUICH/USGA

GOLF IN AMERICA

To “play golf” means many things to many people. It can be recreation or competition. It can occur in cities or rural areas. It can consist of 18 holes or a trip to the driving range. But while its form and definition may vary from community to community, one thing is clear: this country is united in its love of golf.



Lions Municipal Golf Course in Austin, Texas



(LEFT TO RIGHT) DARREN CARROLL/USGA; ROBERT BECK/USGA (2)



THE GREAT OUTDOORS GOLFERS AND LOYAL COMPANIONS ALIKE FIND JOY IN GETTING FRESH AIR AND EXERCISE AT THE COURSE.



Goat Hill Park in Oceanside, Calif.

GOLF IN AMERICA



From top: Snakehole Golf and Country Club in Apache Junction, Ariz.; Forest Park Golf Course in St. Louis; Goat Hill Park in Oceanside, Calif.



(L, FROM TOP) FRED VUICH; WHITNEY CURTIS; ROBERT BECK/USGA; (R) FRED VUICH/USGA

DIFFERENT STROKES NO MATTER THE FOOTWEAR, SURROUNDINGS OR PLAYING SURFACE,
GOLFERS' PASSION FOR THE GAME RUNS DEEP.



Snakehole Golf and Country Club in
Apache Junction, Ariz.



East Potomac Golf Course in Washington, D.C.

GOLF IN AMERICA

Grant Wolfe



Lauren Peter and Jennifer Rosenberg



Steven Vilts



Ari Hochman



OPPOSITE: SIMON BRUTY/USGA; (R, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) EJ CARR; SCOTT HALLERAN; EJ CARR; ROBERT BECK/USGA

FACES IN THE CROWD GOLFERS OF ALL AGES, ABILITIES AND BACKGROUNDS ARE DRAWN TO THE CHALLENGE AND BEAUTY OF THE GAME.

GOLF IN AMERICA



ROBERT BECK/USGA

Rancho Park Driving Range in Los Angeles



HOME ON THE RANGE

THE NUMBER OF AMERICANS ENGAGED IN OFF-COURSE FORMS OF GOLF PARTICIPATION, LIKE DRIVING RANGES, HAS INCREASED IN EACH OF THE LAST FIVE YEARS.

GOLF IN AMERICA



North Kohala Golf Park in Kapaau, Hawaii



OPPOSITE: JORDAN NAHOLOWAA MURPH; (R, FROM TOP) WHITNEY CURTIS; SCOTT HALLERAN/USGA



Forest Park Golf Course
in St. Louis



Palm Beach (Fla.) Par 3 Golf Course

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS THERE ARE MORE GOLF COURSES (16,383) IN THE U.S. THAN MCDONALD'S OR STARBUCKS RESTAURANTS, A TESTAMENT TO THE OMNIPRESENCE OF THE GAME ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

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BY





Brooklyn Sweet Spot, Brooklyn



PLAY

WELL

*Golf's health benefits have never been more
well documented, more apparent or more needed*

by JIM GORANT

photo-illustrations by JOHN KUCZALA





ongratulations to the rest of the world.

They finally figured out what golfers have known for going on 500 years: A few hours on the links is a nature walk wrapped in a bond-building exercise stuffed inside a therapy session.

The irony? We have a global pandemic to thank for spreading the joy of golf, as hordes of the quarantine-addled flocked to courses last year, drawn to an outdoor activity that allows them to be social yet safe. Come to find out, those new converts were getting more than an afternoon out of the house.

“Golf is a great mix of exercise, adaptability and mental exertion, but just about everyone can do it,” said Dr. Christopher Klifto, an orthopedic surgeon at Duke Health in Durham, N.C., and an avid golfer. “It requires strength, mobility and conditioning, especially for kids and seniors.”

Some scoff, but Klifto has little patience for the haters. “I don’t want to hear it,” he said. “I played soccer in college and I do CrossFit, and when I walk 6 miles with a bag on my back, I’m shot at the end. Even in a cart, you still get exercise and mobility. In order to work properly, joints like to move, and golf gives you that.”

When executed properly, the golf swing requires the use of multiple major muscle groups, including the pectorals (chest), deltoids (shoulders), triceps and biceps

(arms), latissimus dorsi (back), abdominals, glutes (butt), quadriceps (thighs) and several small muscles in the shins.

“The golf swing is a full-body, dynamic movement, and if you’re off by a degree or two the difference can be huge,” said Tyler Campbell, director of performance at The Golf Performance Center in Ridgefield, Conn. “It’s an athletic movement, and you have to activate all those muscles and have great body control to make it work.”

Getting Around

Then there’s the walking. A few years ago, the notion of taking 10,000 steps a day, as both a means to lose weight and stay healthy, swept across the country faster than you can say “fitness tracker.” At the same time, multiple studies,

including one by the American Heart Association, have shown that walking for 30 minutes a day, five days a week helps to lower the risk of chronic illness, including heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes, certain cancers and Alzheimer’s disease.

Golf, if nothing else, is a good excuse to take a long walk – or even a series of short ones. And there is evidence that taking the footpath over the cart path is on the rise. The National Golf Foundation recently reported that 35 percent of core golfers said they were walking the course more often than riding a cart. Once again, the pandemic may have helped.

“A lot of courses restricted players to one person per cart for safety reasons, which meant they would often run out of carts by



mid-morning,” said Lee Pace, a North Carolina-based writer whose upcoming book, “Random Walks,” celebrates the joy of hoofing it on the links. “People had to walk, because there weren’t any carts left or because they didn’t want to play alone. Many golfers told me they appreciated the game in a way they hadn’t in years once they started walking.”

Pace noted that venerable Pinehurst Resort now allows golfers to walk — alone, with a caddie or with a push cart — on all its courses at any time, while golf accessory maker Sun Mountain reports that its 2020 push cart sales were 2½ times greater than they were in 2019.

While all that extra perambulation is great, hope is not lost for cart jockeys. The 30-minutes-a-day dictum can be incremental, meaning that five walks of six minutes each is as good as a half-hour in one shot. Recent research, including a 2019 study out of Harvard Medical School, suggests the magic number of daily steps for reduced mortality is not 10,000, but as little as 4,500, although health benefits increase up to 7,500. Riders who don’t park right next to their ball or who walk every fourth fairway are likely still hitting daily walking targets.

“The research is pretty clear,” said Dr. Carol Ewing Garber, the director of the applied physiology

program and a professor of movement science at Columbia University. “Even light, not very intense exercise has health benefits.”

The Numbers

That sounds good, but what about the math? Multiple experiments and personal reporting based on fitness tracker data show that walking a full 18 burns between 1,200 and 1,500 calories, depending on the length of the course, the terrain and whether a player carries or uses a push cart. Players riding in a cart obviously get less exercise but still burn about 700 to 800 calories.

Even more intriguing, a 2008



**"Golf is a great mix of exercise,
adaptability and mental exertion, but just
about everyone can do it."**

— DR. CHRISTOPHER KLIFTO

study by the Karolinska Institute in Sweden found that golfers had a 40 percent lower death rate than nongolfers, which corresponds to a five-year increase in life expectancy. The effect was observed in men and women, across all age groups and socioeconomic categories. One notable finding was that a lower handicap correlated to greater benefits overall. Translation: Better players, along with those who play more often, received an even bigger health boost.

The researchers acknowledged that off-course factors, including an overall healthier lifestyle, may have played a role, but that could also mean that playing regularly leads to improved habits.

“A round of golf means being outside for four or five hours, walking at a fast pace for [about 5 miles], something which is known to be good for health,” Professor Anders Ahlbom, one of the authors, said at the time.

As with many pursuits, though, frequency is a factor. “Unfortunately, doing extra one day

won’t make up for being sedentary the rest of the week,” said geriatrician Dr. Richard W. Besdine, a professor of medicine and public health at Brown University. Based on the Swedish research and the 30-minute, five-day walking goal, the ultimate prescription for better health through golf might be walking nine holes four times a week rather than 18 once or twice a week.

But who has time to play four nines a week?

Retiring Types

Often, retirees do, and they might also be the ones with the most to gain. “Many aspects of golf resonate with the perspective I give on successful aging: remaining active, being social and getting outside,” said Besdine.

As further support for the 30-by-5 program, he cites a recent study of people over 65 complaining of memory loss. One segment of the group began the prescribed walking program while the other segment maintained its previous lifestyle. The walkers not only showed no

SLOW-PLAYING PARKINSON’S

WHEN LEIGH BADER found out he had Parkinson’s disease, he did what might only make sense to a longtime PGA of America professional: He started hitting 250 to 300 balls a day. “It was golf as calisthenics,” he said. “I wasn’t trying to hone my swing; I would end up grunting.” That was 2014, and he’s still going strong.

Along the way, Bader met Dr. Ann Marie Wells, a Parkinson’s researcher at Massachusetts General Hospital, who noted how Bader had maintained functionality. Exercise is

a key component in slowing the progress of Parkinson’s – there is no cure for the degenerative neuro-muscular condition – and of all the options available, none has a greater impact than tai chi. Bader called it “the gold standard.”

Bader didn’t practice tai chi, but he explained his daily ball-striking routine, and Wells noted that many of her high-performing patients played golf. A study was born.

Five instructors from Bader’s own Performance Center at Pine Oaks Golf Course, in South Easton, Mass., agreed to work

with about 50 Parkinson’s patients. The goal was not better golf, but to replicate Bader’s golf-as-exercise routine. Before starting, all the participants went through a battery of tests that measure both physical and cognitive function.

Over 10 weeks, the participants took part in two one-hour range sessions per week. Some of them were recorded at regular intervals. “When you look at the tape, you can see profound differences in balance, coordination and muscle movement,” said Bader. The final study by Dr. Wells and her research

partner, Dr. Remy Johnson, has not been published yet, but Bader said the double-blind empirical experiment will show that golf is the new champion: It beat tai chi.

The goal now is a larger, national study, an idea Bader has broached with the PGA of America. The pandemic has put such research on hold, but he’s hopeful a wide-scale project will come together after the country fully reopens. “It’s an opportunity to help a lot of people,” said Bader, “and that was something I had been looking for.” –J.G.

Multiple experiments and personal reporting based on fitness tracker data show that walking a full 18 burns between 1,200 and 1,500 calories.

further deterioration, they actually improved on memory tests over time.

The benefits go beyond walking. "With aging, bones and muscles get weaker over time," said Columbia's Garber. "Swinging a club can help maintain the amount of muscle and strength. It also contributes to keeping the joints mobile, which helps fight arthritis."

Falling down is the No. 1 cause of injury and death for senior citizens, according to the CDC, and golf can help prevent such spills. Hitting the ball, playing from uneven lies and walking

up inclines to teeing grounds and greens activate the core muscles, which play a prominent role in balance. "Playing golf gives you the skills and assets you need to age gracefully," said Klifto, the orthopedic surgeon.

Junior Circuit

Between 1978 and 2016 the childhood obesity rate in America jumped from 5 percent to 18.5 percent, and it now affects almost 14 million kids, according to the CDC. The rate has slowed in the last 15 years, but it's still rising, and

while there are multiple causes, inactivity is a major culprit. "Most pediatricians agree that children are spending too much time online," said Dr. Jocelyn Wittstein, a professor of orthopedic surgery and sports medicine at Duke. "Studies show it's up to more than an hour a day. Sports can be an outlet."

The upside for kids extends beyond weight loss and cardio training to more nuanced areas of development. Using those core muscles improves posture, and simply being upright, especially while swinging and carrying a bag, puts healthy stress on bones, helping to build density and strength. "Loading the skeleton in general is important at those ages," said Campbell, who works mostly with juniors. "We give them guidance on how to do it safely."



The sequence of movements that makes up a swing helps build coordination, develops the nervous system and creates a sense of body awareness, according to Campbell. Playing golf promotes confidence and resilience, too.

“How do you carry yourself? How do you bounce back when things go bad?” Campbell said. “When kids are still emotionally developing, those things can be hard to comprehend, and golf helps them learn to deal with them.”

Well, Well, Well

Beyond the strictly physical benefits, there is a greater realm of general wellness that encompasses everything from self-esteem to mental health to the meaning of life. “Why do you think there are so many spiritual books written about golf?” said Dr. Gio Valiante, a psychiatrist who has worked with Jack Nicklaus, Jordan Spieth and numerous other tour pros. “The game is a mirror. It reveals us and allows us a chance to work on ourselves.”

Even sticking to the more physiological aspects of wellness, golf scores well. Studies in Japan and the U.S. have shown that walking in nature can reduce brain stress, lower levels of stress hormones in the body, boost the immune system and alter neural networks in ways that counteract anxiety and depression. One study even showed high levels of, and higher activity among, cancer fighting cells in cancer patients after walking outdoors. “Countless studies show there are psychological, cognitive and emotional benefits,” said Valiante.

Numerous studies have also shown that spending time with others and having an active network of social interactions makes people healthier and happier. “Human beings are social by nature,” said Valiante. “Golf makes you vulnerable, and being vulnerable in front of other people really bonds you.”

More than anything, though, golf can provide a sense of purpose. Playing and practicing is more engaging than going for a 30-minute run, which encourages people to stick with the game and play more often. “As we get older it gets harder to find meaning in what we do,” said Valiante, “but watch a 70-year-old try to make a 3-foot putt and



see how much he cares.”

If from no one else, take it from golf’s own doctor, Alister MacKenzie, designer of Augusta National, Cypress Point and Royal Melbourne.

“One of the reasons why I decided to give up medicine and take to golf architecture was my firm conviction of the extraordinary influence on health of pleasurable excitement, especially when combined with fresh air and exercise,” wrote MacKenzie, who trained as a surgeon. “How frequently have I, with great difficulty, persuaded patients who were never off my doorstep to take up golf, and how rarely, if ever, have I seen them in my consulting room again.” ♦



GENERATION TEXT

*As content consumption
habits evolve, new voices
have taken their place
in golf's media
landscape*

by **MIKE TROSTEL**

illustrations by **WEBB CREATIVE**





N

EVER HAS THERE been more information at our fingertips. We are one swipe, click or facial scan away from our favorite podcast, latest news or viral video. No matter the size of the screen or whether it's for business or pleasure, we are absorbed in our devices day and night. One thing is certain: no previous generation had so many choices of what to watch, read or listen to.

While the march of technology has downsized countless newsrooms across the country, it has also opened doors for other forms of content production. Instead of needing a television studio or print publication as a platform to tell stories, people can create and easily share unlimited streams of information and participate in online communities.

From instructors and data analysts to filmmakers and podcasters, the following 10 people have seized the opportunity to become some of the game's key influencers.



Shane Bacon

GOLF CHANNEL AND "GET A GRIP"

BACKGROUND: Bacon's ascent in golf media began with a blog he started out of college and led him to be a play-by-play announcer for Fox Sports in 2015, covering USGA championships through 2019. Now, he co-anchors "Golf Today," a mid-day show on Golf Channel, and hosts "Get a Grip," a podcast that pairs the affable Bacon with PGA Tour pro Max Homa.

PHILOSOPHY: "In the media space you need to be willing to adapt and not fear trying new things. Change can be intimidating, but it's necessary because in five years the way we consume is going to be different."

PARTNERSHIP: "For 'Get a Grip' to work, Max needed to buy in right away. To his credit, he was all-in right from the beginning. What makes him so good is that he's on the forefront of social media and isn't afraid to be vulnerable about his profession."

EVOLUTION: Bacon, the broadcast journalist, and Homa, the professional golfer who uses his approachable personality to give insights about life on Tour, have proven to be a winning combination. They are on the forefront of a trend in which active athletes such as J.J. Redick and Rory McIlroy use podcasting as a platform to connect directly with fans.



Sam "Riggs" Bozoian

BARSTOOL SPORTS

BACKGROUND: When Riggs and Trent Ryan approached Barstool Sports founder Dave Portnoy with the idea of starting a golf podcast in early 2017, they were told not to let it interfere with their day jobs as bloggers. Six months after its debut, "Foreplay" catapulted to the top spot in the golf podcast rankings and hasn't left, validating their instincts that fans craved more relatable golf content.

APPROACH: "Going in, we had no background in media and neither of us broke 80 consistently. But we're golf fans and we talk like golf fans – that resonates whether you're a member at an exclusive private club or play the local muni."

OPPORTUNITY: "This is the best time ever to be a golf fan. Whatever you're looking for and no matter what level of fan you are, there is so much content out there and it's more accessible than ever."

EVOLUTION: The "Foreplay" crew has expanded to include Frankie Borelli and Ben "Lurch" Severance, and produces two podcasts and several videos a week. They also developed the Barstool Classic, a series of tournaments that brings together thousands of "Stoolies" around the country and culminates in a year-end championship.



Jon Cavalier

PHOTOGRAPHER

BACKGROUND: While most golf photographers work for media outlets, Cavalier found his niche as a wanderlust freelancer who also works as a civil litigation trial lawyer. His Twitter and Instagram pages (@LinksGems) have more than 100,000 followers.

PHILOSOPHY: "My goal is to show how beautiful the world is by creating a forum for people to see pretty pictures. I'd be doing the same thing if I had 27 followers, but it's more enjoyable when you know more people are interested."

EDUCATION: "Golf can be intimidating if you're new to the game, so I've loved the interaction in the comment section. It's a safe space where people who have a hunger to learn can feel comfortable asking a novice question about architecture."

EVOLUTION: Cavalier first took his camera out to Somerset Hills C.C. in Bernardsville, N.J., in the fall of 2014. Now, clubs seek him out to photograph their course. When not in court, he travels the country with his wife, playing golf and taking photos while she runs marathons. At the end of the year, he donates all profits from the sale of his photos to an animal rescue shelter.

"We're golf fans and we talk like golf fans – that resonates whether you're a member at an exclusive private club or play the local muni."

— Sam "Riggs" Bozoian

"Change can be intimidating, but it's necessary because in five years the way we consume content is going to be different."

— Shane Bacon

“For this game to grow and thrive, it’s important to understand how younger generations consume content.”

— Nathalie Filler

“It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Seeing the golf was great, but more than the shot-by-shot, my goal was to find unique moments that fans don’t normally get to see.”

— Andrew Haynes



Nathalie Filler

GOLF INSTRUCTOR

BACKGROUND: A former college player who was mentored by PGA of America President Suzy Whaley, Filler got her start as a teaching professional at the Philadelphia Cricket Club. Now at the Vinoy Golf Club in St. Petersburg, Fla., she has embraced social media as a tool to reach golfers worldwide with her tips and lessons.

BENEFITS: “Recording online instructional videos has made me a better teacher and communicator because for those lessons to work, they need to be simple and clear so golfers can learn and apply them quickly.”

OPPORTUNITY: “A lot of clubs and instructors still don’t embrace social media, but for this game to grow and thrive, it’s important to understand how younger generations consume content.”

EVOLUTION: The National Golf Foundation reports that 64 percent of core golfers watch golf instruction online, a number that has grown steadily year-over-year. While in-person lessons will always be part of the golf experience, the opportunity for Filler and others to build their brands and broaden their reach through online instruction continues to expand.



Andrew Haynes

U.S. OPEN “ONLY FAN”

BACKGROUND: Haynes is a graphic designer in New York City who has developed a loyal Instagram following (@ahaynes01) for his golf photography. He was selected to be the USGA’s “only fan” at the 2020 U.S. Open, capturing behind-the-scenes images of the championship at Winged Foot.

OPPORTUNITY: “It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Seeing the golf was great, but more than the shot-by-shot, my goal was to find unique moments that fans don’t normally get to see.”

APPROACH: “In photography, people tend to copy what others are doing. But to me, it’s not about framing the perfect photo. I’m looking for a different perspective to capture a moment and tell a story.”

EVOLUTION: Haynes picked up golf in his mid-20s and was hooked from his first shot. What started as a hobby quickly became a passion. The development of smartphone technology and accessibility of social media platforms have allowed him to share his photography with a wider audience.



Andy Johnson

THE FRIED EGG

BACKGROUND: Johnson was your quintessential diehard amateur player who couldn't get enough golf content, but he was continually disappointed by the analysis he read. So, he started "The Fried Egg" podcast, which espouses an independent and irreverent approach and has become a favorite spot for golf architecture aficionados in particular.

PHILOSOPHY: "Honesty builds trust. All we have is our voice, so our readers and listeners need to know that I really believe something and I'm not saying it because it will be a controversial hot take."

OPPORTUNITY: "Social media allows for affordable discovery. It's a low-cost avenue to reach people and is one of the biggest reasons for our growth."

AUDIENCE: "We talk to the 'golf tragic' who can't get enough of the game and want every bit of detail on its history, architecture and course strategy."

EVOLUTION: Johnson sent his first newsletter to 10 friends in late 2015. When he got positive feedback, he sent it to everyone he had played golf with. Now it's one of the game's fastest-growing media companies, with two podcasts and a three-times-weekly newsletter.



Erik Anders Lang

CONTENT CREATOR

BACKGROUND: The documentary filmmaker turned golf nut took up the game at age 29 at his brother's urging and parlayed his passion into a creative empire. Lang is the creator of Skratch's "Adventures in Golf," founder of Random Golf Club and host of an eponymous podcast.

PHILOSOPHY: "We all come from different backgrounds, but we can find a lot of common ground on the golf course. The game is like a universal language. I'm a big believer that it doesn't matter where you go, it matters how you go."

OPPORTUNITY: "I was doing what I was excited about [filmmaking] and got lucky. I wanted to talk with a bunch of interesting people in strange places all over the world. The thing that unites us is our shared love of golf."

EVOLUTION: Two decades ago, social media was in its infancy, Lang didn't play golf and he had no aspirations to be on camera. Now he is the king of longform golf content, having just finished the sixth season of "Adventures" and recorded his 200th podcast. Lang is focused on growing Random Golf Club, a community-based concept centered on the idea that everyone should feel welcome on a golf course.



Hally Leadbetter

GOLF DIGEST

BACKGROUND: The daughter of renowned golf instructor David Leadbetter, Hally started her journey in the game as a member of a golf-obsessed family. She played collegiate golf, worked for the PGA Tour and found her way to Golf Digest, where she injects humor and popular culture into her commentaries.

PHILOSOPHY: "Making someone laugh is my favorite thing. Connecting golf and pop culture makes the game more approachable, so you can enjoy the content if you're a scratch golfer or just like to be entertained."

OPPORTUNITY: "With social media, you can make your own stuff. You don't need to wait for someone to ask you to host a show. People are on their phones all the time, so the only limit is your own creativity."

EVOLUTION: Television used to be the only vehicle for aspiring on-camera hosts. Now, golf influencers like Tisha Alyn and Ryan "Coach Rusty" Rustand have created their own mini-networks online, reaching hundreds of thousands of fans directly, while Leadbetter has interjected new digital life into a 70-year-old print publication.

NEW VOICES



Justin Ray

15TH CLUB

BACKGROUND: A self-proclaimed “sports nerd,” Ray was a researcher at ESPN and Golf Channel before joining 15th Club as the head of content. His responsibilities range from writing and podcasting to building databases and analyzing statistics, all in an effort to tell the story of on-course performance and enhance the fan experience.

PHILOSOPHY: “As traditional data has evolved to modernized analytics, there are more tools to tell people what’s going on. But without context, they’re just numbers. My job is to help it all make sense.”

OPPORTUNITY: “Ten years ago, the only golf statistics available were [driving distance], fairways hit, greens in regulation and number of putts. Now we have so many more tools to accurately judge execution – it’s transformed the way we can analyze golf.”

EVOLUTION: The data revolution may have taken longer to be embraced in golf compared to other sports, but thanks to the work of Ray, strokes-gained creator Mark Broadie and others, fans no longer have to rely on anachronistic and sometimes misleading statistics to quantify a player’s performance.



Chris “Soly” Solomon

NO LAYING UP

BACKGROUND: What started as a text message thread between Soly and his friends Phil “Big Randy” Landes and Todd “Tron Carter” Schuster turned into what is arguably the most successful online golf media brand. In just over six years, they have amassed nearly 500,000 followers and subscribers.

OPPORTUNITY: “Golf needed new, independent voices. We wanted to create a place where we could talk about the game the way you do with your buddies, not the buttoned-up way they do on broadcasts.”

AUDIENCE: “They’re mostly avid, educated fans who are passionate about the game and appreciate its nuances. We kept hearing that the way we talked about the game, the players and our trips resonated with a lot of people and their personal experiences.”

EVOLUTION: A No Laying Up Twitter account launched in 2013 expanded to a website and podcast. By 2017, the venture became so successful, Solomon and his friends quit their day jobs to focus on it full time. They have added several video series and podcasts, including “Strapped,” “Tourist Sauce” and “Crash Course.”

“We all come from different backgrounds, but we can find a lot of common ground on the golf course.”

— Erik Anders Lang

“As traditional data has evolved to modernized analytics, there are more tools to tell people what’s going on.”

— Justin Ray

FOR ALL GOLF IS



AND ALL IT CAN BE

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SAVING GRACE

***Despite the challenges of autism,
Samantha Perrotta persists –
on and off the course***

by **RON DRISCOLL** • *photo by* **JONATHAN KOLBE**





TEN YEARS AGO, Samantha Perrotta was in a very lonely place, a place where – if something good didn’t happen soon – she might not have come out alive.

The Bordentown, N.J., native is autistic, though her autism had gone undiagnosed to that point. Autism, also known as ASD (autism spectrum disorder), is a complex neurobiological and developmental disorder that can make social situations challenging. (*See sidebar, opposite page.*) High school had been difficult for Perrotta, a college semester away from home a disaster, and she retreated to her room, suffering from an eating disorder and a penchant to injure herself.

“I didn’t want to live anymore, so I cut myself,” said Perrotta, 31.

Starting at age 22, Perrotta found refuge in golf, a solitary pursuit that didn’t require anyone’s input or approval. But as she continued to improve through unflagging effort, there was an unintended consequence.

“Golf got me out of my room and gave me something to focus on – that’s probably the biggest thing,” Perrotta said. “I just wanted to be alone. Then as I got better, more people were around, so that kind of backfired on me,” she said with a laugh.

Perrotta’s performances in Women’s Golf Association of Philadelphia (WGAP) events earned her back-to-back Player of the Year honors in 2018 and 2019; in 2020, she was named the New Jersey State Golf Association’s Women’s Player of the Year. Her wins last year included her fourth Farnum Cup – the WGAP’s stroke-play event – as well as the WGAP match-play and New Jersey Women’s Mid-Amateur titles. She has qualified for four U.S. Women’s Mid-Amateur Championships, in 2015, 2016, 2018 and 2019, reaching match play three times.

But the extraordinary golf progression is secondary to the strides Perrotta has made off the course.

“She was in a really depressed state, a very dark place, for a couple of years,” said Frank Perrotta, Samantha’s father. “Back then, autism wasn’t out there like it is nowadays. We took her to doctors and psychologists, but it wasn’t until relatively late in her life that we knew what was going on. When we started reading about it, bingo, the signs were all there.”

The diagnosis occurred shortly before Samantha decided to pursue golf.

“She found golf on her own, and it has become her niche,” Frank said. “It’s helped her get out of that bad situation she was in and opened the doors for her to meet a lot of people.”

When Perrotta began to play seriously about eight years ago, her family joined Old York Country Club in Chesterfield, N.J.

“A friend of ours named Vicki Richards explained Sam’s situation to the other women at the club,” said Frank. “I thank her to this day because it helped tremendously. Probably 90 percent of them understood and accepted it.”

Even in golf, though, the acceptance hasn’t been universal. Through experience and her own growth, Perrotta has adapted.

“She embraces the game because a lot of people are very nice to her,” said Frank. “She’s learned to steer away from people who aren’t nice.”

“When Samantha first joined, she was very shy, very quiet, and we all respected that,” said Bill Marine, an assistant pro at Old York. “Golf became a common ground. As she got more comfortable, her circle grew. She’s a terrific person with a great wit.”

“If I have to talk to someone, I go do it,” Perrotta admitted. “I try to disassociate myself a little bit. When I’m done talking, I think, thank God it’s done.”

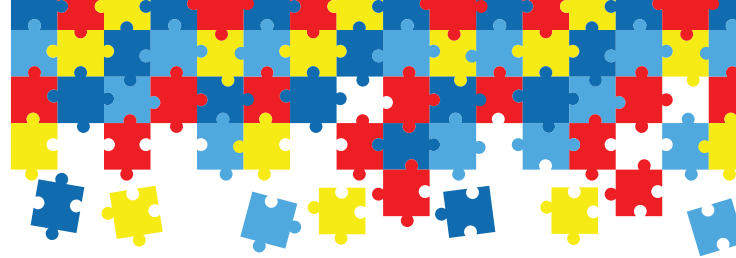
Other friends in golf have helped lower the hurdles.

“Communication can sometimes be hard for Samantha, but once you know her, she’ll talk forever,” said Helena Sullivan, a former school superintendent and a member at Old York. “I do a lot of fundraisers, and I turn to Samantha for help. Instead of playing that day, she will work on an event. I see growth, a comfort level.”

Some of Perrotta’s initial competitive efforts did not go smoothly. Her first attempt to qualify for a USGA event resulted in her walking off the course.

“Five or six years ago, I used to have panic attacks where I couldn’t finish a round,” Perrotta said. “There were too many people around sometimes. Because I’m a little bit different, sometimes people want to target you. And when you run into problems, it makes you wonder if you want to go back.”

Geoff Jones, a noted instructor who runs golf schools in Texarkana, Texas, and Warwick, N.Y., began working with Perrotta a few years ago.



"My wife (Cindy) teaches severely handicapped children," said Jones. "I've also worked with the Wounded Warriors, so I have some experience with unusual situations. But I would say Samantha's is the most unusual, and by far the most rewarding thing I've experienced in 35 years doing this."

A few years ago, Perrotta traveled alone for the first time to Texarkana to spend a week working with Jones. The experience was pivotal.

"I missed seeing her arrive, and I found her sitting under a tree," said Jones, who has helped Perrotta negotiate the competitive golf landscape. "I told her not to be intimidated, that she was among friends who love golf. By the end of the week, she was sitting in my office joining in group conversations."

In 2018, Jones was on hand when Perrotta captured her first New Jersey Women's Mid-Amateur.

"After she signed her card, Sam gave me a hug," said Jones. "I would be willing to bet it's one of the very few hugs she's ever given. I've had players win on nearly every tour in the world, but to see how she's progressed, what she's overcome, it's inspirational."

Perrotta credits Dick Smith, her first instructor, with helping her to believe in herself, while Marine and others help her see the lighter side of life, along with her stuffed bear, Goober, who travels with her "for fun and comfort," as she put it. Perrotta's interests also include sports card collecting; her specialty is hockey, and she's a diehard Vancouver Canucks fan.

"I have caddied for her in qualifying events, and some of the steps getting to the first tee can be edgy for her," said Marine. "An official may not know, for example, that socially, she's trying to make some breakthroughs. But once you put a golf club in her hand, it's a different story."

"Early on, her anxiety got the best of her and she had to withdraw from some things," said Frank. "Now she understands it can go sour; she has learned to accept that you hang in there and you finish."

As far as the game has already taken her, there is no telling where Samantha's golf odyssey will finish. ♦

Autism Awareness

The core symptoms of autism are social communication challenges and restricted, repetitive behaviors

- About one-third of people with autism are nonverbal, and many people with autism have sensory issues involving over- or under-sensitivities to sounds, lights, touch and other stimuli.
- The CDC reports that approximately 1 in 54 children in the U.S. is diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
- Boys are four times more likely to be diagnosed with autism than girls.
- Autism affects all ethnic and socioeconomic groups; minority groups tend to be diagnosed later and less often.
- There is no medical detection for autism.
- Research indicates that genetics are involved in the vast majority of cases.
- Children born to older parents are at a higher risk for having autism.
- Extensive research makes it clear that childhood vaccines do not cause autism.
- Nearly two-thirds of children with autism between the ages of 6 and 15 have been bullied.
- Nearly 28 percent of 8-year-olds with ASD have self-injurious behaviors.
- Anxiety disorders affect up to 40 percent of youths on the autism spectrum.
- World Autism Awareness Day is April 2, and April is Autism Awareness Month in the U.S.

(SOURCE: AUTISM SPEAKS)



Perrotta has qualified for four U.S. Women's Mid-Amateurs since taking up the game in earnest in 2013.

THE CARETA

In February 2021, the USGA Green Section introduced “Deacon,” an innovative digital tool designed to support golf facilities and enhance the golfer experience. The tool is named for Arnold Palmer’s father and honors the 50 years that Milfred Jerome “Deacon” Palmer worked as the superintendent of Latrobe (Pa.) Country Club, where he also taught his son to play golf and fostered Arnold’s lifelong appreciation for the game and its values.

photos courtesy of
THE PALMER FAMILY

MILFRED JEROME PALMER – the father of one of golf’s iconic figures – came by his nickname of Deacon early in life, when he was just a grade-schooler.

In his recollection of the incident, Milfred stood up against some people in a neighboring town who were giving an older African American named Deacon Thompson “a rough time.” Whether it was supposed to be derisive or a compliment, the name – commonly shortened to “Deke” – stuck as exemplary of how deacons take care of others in their communities.

“Pap had a set of principles that he lived by and believed in,” said Arnold, his oldest son. “He just treated others like they liked to be treated. I guess I heard him say that more than anything else.”

As his illustrious son often put it, Deacon Palmer simply wanted to be remembered as a caretaker of the game. Deacon’s reserved personality made it unlikely that he would have uttered those words about himself.

Although Deacon’s stewardship involved just one golf course, its role in Arnold Palmer’s development has earned Latrobe (Pa.) Country Club revered status among golfers. For a half-century, from 1926 until his death in 1976, Deacon served as the superintendent at Latrobe, nestled at the edge of the Allegheny Mountains, 40 miles southeast of Pittsburgh



Deacon Palmer was the head professional at Latrobe Country Club for 44 years and he served as Arnold’s instructor from the age of 4. Right: Deacon and Arnold Palmer at Latrobe in the early 1970s.

KER

*Deacon Palmer's exceptional
life in the game*

by DAVID NORMOYLE



DEACON

in the heart of western Pennsylvania. He shepherded the course even before it opened, having worked on the construction crew that began building the original nine-hole layout in 1921.

Deacon was born in 1904, when golf courses were a rare commodity in western Pennsylvania or anywhere in the country. Yet before Arnold came along in 1929, eventually creating a golf boom of his own, Deacon joined the vanguard of native-born greenkeepers and club professionals who helped advance the game in America in the 20th century. He added the duties of Latrobe's head professional in 1932 and taught his son the game, starting when Arnie was age 4.

Along with the nickname that lasted a lifetime, another early influence on Deacon was the childhood polio that left him with a deformed foot and noticeable limp, requiring a lifelong dependence on leg braces for support. As a result, Deacon strengthened his upper body – Arnold recalled his father being able to do more than 10 one-armed chin-ups with either arm – and developed a quiet and unyielding work ethic that overcame any perception of disability, whether in his own mind or that of others.

His religious-sounding nickname notwithstanding, Deacon wasn't exactly the church-going type. "Don't be upset that your father doesn't always go to church with you," his daughter Lois Jean recalled a local priest saying. "If every man believed as strongly as he does – and practiced beliefs as well as he does – this would be a better world to live in."



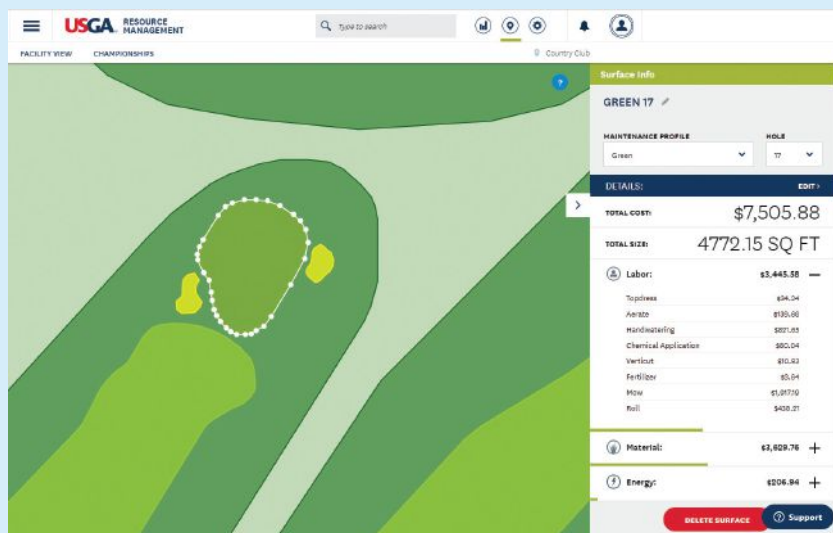
(Clockwise from top) Deacon Palmer helped build Latrobe Country Club in the early 1920s and worked there the rest of his life; Doris, Arnold and Deacon Palmer at a celebration of Arnold's victory in the 1954 U.S. Amateur; Deacon and Arnold at Latrobe Airport in the early 1960s.

‘Deacon’ app helps deliver better playing conditions

by HUNKI YUN

FOR DECADES, golfers stepping onto the first tee at Latrobe (Pa.) Country Club knew that they were about to embark on an enjoyable round, whether they were looking to enjoy the natural surroundings, try out a new swing thought, or spend time with family and friends.

Through his experience, knowledge and hard work, Deacon Palmer was able to provide the stage for these memorable golf experiences at Latrobe for five decades. From the start of his career, Palmer had access to the USGA Green Section’s research and information about the science of agronomy and turfgrass maintenance. By the time he retired, the Green



Section had expanded its resource kit to include on-site visits and tools such as the Stimpmeter.

As the USGA continues to advance its mission of supporting golf facilities and fostering better experiences for golfers, the Green

Section is proud to introduce a digital tool named Deacon. The name honors the work and legacy of Deacon Palmer and his fraternity of hard-working facility managers who care for the thousands of courses around the country

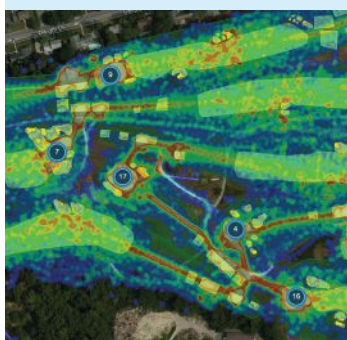
enjoyed by millions of golfers.

In addition, Deacon instilled the values that helped his son, Arnold Palmer, become one of the most beloved figures in sports history and usher in an unprecedented era of growth, accessibility and populism for golf.

The brainchild of Jim Moore, the USGA’s longtime director of Green Section education, Deacon is an innovative app that helps facility managers make common-sense, data-driven decisions that provide a better golfer experience while also optimizing their consumption of key resources.

Golfers want consistent, enjoyable conditions, but the financial toll of taking care of a golf course threatens the ability to provide what golfers want.

Just as the use of data has proliferated in other areas of golf – think range finders and advanced stats such as strokes gained – Deacon has the potential to make a positive impact for golf facilities and golfers throughout the country.



“PAP HAD A SET OF PRINCIPLES THAT HE LIVED BY AND BELIEVED IN. HE JUST TREATED OTHERS LIKE THEY LIKED TO BE TREATED.” — ARNOLD PALMER

Deacon, Doris and their four children lived in a humble house next to the present-day fifth tee at Latrobe Country Club, where everything revolved around golf. That influence continued when younger son Jerry took the reins as the superintendent and later general manager at Latrobe.

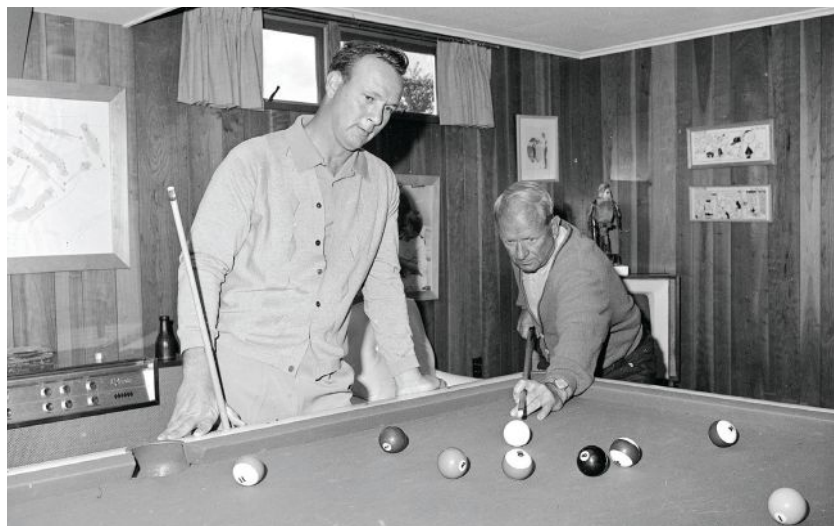
“We ate, slept and totally lived golf,” said Lois Jean. “I grew up thinking everyone lived golf.”

Bill Adams, one of Deacon’s laborers at Latrobe in the 1960s and later a member of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, recalled, “Deke was pretty much a self-taught man, although he attended seminars and conferences at Penn State.

“I remember when I was fresh out of Penn State and thought I knew everything there was to know about turfgrass maintenance,” said Adams. “[Deke] would just evaluate everything from a common-sense point of view.”

One of Deacon’s proudest achievements was converting Latrobe from its original nine holes to a testing 18-hole course that debuted in July 1964, a collaborative design effort with Arnold.

Consider the significance of that date. In April 1964 Arnold had won the Masters for the fourth and final time. It was his seventh and



Arnold and Deacon Palmer in the basement of Arnold’s home in Latrobe in the mid-1960s. “We ate, slept and totally lived golf,” said Arnold’s sister, Lois Jean.

last major professional victory, to go along with his win in the 1954 U.S. Amateur. That means Arnold Palmer became *Arnold Palmer* playing out of a nine-hole course, without a practice area.

Arnold served as the caddie-master at Latrobe for a time as a child, and was not much of an assistant pro. In fact, his father fired him for playing too much golf and not minding the shop – though Arnold made good on that debt in 1971 when he purchased Latrobe C.C. outright. From son of the greenkeeper to owner of the club in a matter of a generation: Arnold Palmer lived an American life.

Not only did Arnold grow up to be golf’s most popular player and revolutionize the business of sports, he was also the first player to win the USGA’s Amateur, Open and Senior Open championships.

In 2016, the year he died at age 87, Arnold wrote, “I suppose, in the final accounting of it all, what I really am inescapably and how I prefer to be thought of in terms of my legacy – is a caretaker of the game, just the way my father was before me.”

As long as golf is played in America, Deacon Palmer will be remembered as someone who cared for the game. ♦

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VENUE SPOTLIGHT

A PERFECT

Seminole Golf Club returns to the stage as it hosts the Walker Cup, an event that suits it in every way

by TOM MACKIN • photos by FRED VUICH

A full-page photograph of a golf course at sunset. A tall palm tree stands in the foreground, its trunk and fronds silhouetted against the bright, low sun. The sun's rays create a lens flare effect. The golf course is lush green with several water hazards and sand traps. In the background, the ocean is visible under a sky with scattered clouds. The overall mood is serene and tropical.

FIT

The lovely, watery 14th hole at Seminole plays to a heavily bunkered green set atop a ridge.

VENUE SPOTLIGHT

IT WAS LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT for Jimmy Dunne when he finally got to see a Walker Cup Match in person, at Chicago Golf Club in 2005. The pageantry of the opening ceremony, the chance to get close to the action, the opportunity to represent your country: It all left a strong impression on the native New Yorker.

“I was thinking, could there be a better place for this than Seminole, or a better thing for us to do?” he said. More than 15 years later, the dream is about to be realized for Dunne, a member at the famed Florida golf club since 1995 and its president since 2012.

When 10-man amateur teams from the USA and Great Britain & Ireland square off on May 8-9 in the 48th Walker Cup Match, they will do so at a club that has been famous for two things since opening on New Year’s Day in 1930: the superb quality of its Donald Ross-designed layout, and its unyielding privacy.

The club relented on the latter tenet, albeit for just one day, by hosting the TaylorMade Driving Relief event last May. Former Walker Cup competitors Rickie Fowler, Dustin Johnson and Rory McIlroy, plus Matthew Wolff, played the course in a televised Skins game that raised more than \$5.5 million for pandemic-related causes.

“The extraordinary nature of the pandemic, and the need and desire for us to do something, is why we did that,” said Dunne. “And I’m glad we did. But I think it also whetted the knowledgeable golfing world’s appetite.”

Hosting the Walker Cup Match required more time and deliberation. After being inspired at Chicago Golf Club in 2005, Dunne let the idea percolate for a few years. Serious discussions with USGA leadership began at the 2013 Walker Cup at the National Golf Links of America in Southampton, N.Y.

One afternoon Dunne was watching the matches with fellow Seminole member Vinny Giles, a former USA Walker Cup Team player and captain. “I said to him, ‘Vinny, what do you think about having a Walker Cup at Seminole?’ He said, ‘Well, it would be unbelievable.’” It took more than three years to become official, but in December 2016, the USGA announced that Seminole and Cypress Point Club would host the Walker Cup in 2021 and 2025, respectively.

“The opportunity to host the Walker Cup, I know Jimmy jumped on it,” said Bob Ford, head professional at Seminole since 1999 and



Fast Facts

What: 48th Walker Cup Match

Format: 4 foursomes (alternate shot) and 8 singles matches on the first day, followed by 4 foursomes and 10 singles matches on the second day. The USA needs 13 points to retain the Cup; GB&I needs 13.5 to win it.

When: Saturday, May 8 and Sunday, May 9, 2021

Where: Juno Beach, Fla.

More Information:
www.walkercup.org



Clockwise from top: Seminole's 18th green is mere steps from the Atlantic Ocean; a quiet oasis awaits in the men's locker room; the stately clubhouse entrance has greeted members and guests for nearly a century.



THE HAWK'S WINTER NEST

IT WAS THE perfect match of golfer and golf club: Ben Hogan and Seminole. The former basked in the club's private nature and golf-rich ambiance, while the latter's near-mythical status was greatly enhanced by the annual presence of the four-time U.S. Open winner known as "The Hawk."

Hogan first competed in the club's Amateur-Professional event in 1941, and later won it with member Michael Phipps, an 11-handicap. Hogan was made an honorary member in the mid-1950s and would come to the club each March and spend a month preparing for the Masters. He would practice in the morning, have lunch, and then play matches with members, notably \$100 Nassaus against five-



Shaw Walker, Ben Hogan and Thomas Pemberton at Seminole in 1960.

time club champion Robert Sweeny, who won the 1937 British Amateur and was runner-up to Arnold Palmer in the 1954 U.S. Amateur. (After once losing four consecutive matches to Sweeny, Hogan asked for and received a stroke a side in future tussles.)

When on the losing end, Hogan would pay up with a check, smartly deducing that few if any members would cash a check

with his signature on it. As for how Hogan felt about this golf haven, a quote in *The Seminole Story*, a club history published in 2007, says it all. "Seminole is the only course I could be perfectly happy playing every single day," he said. "It gives me the most of what I want in a golf course; there is a premium on precision, an emphasis on placing shots. If you can play well there, you can play well anywhere."

recipient of the USGA's Bob Jones Award in 2017 for his contributions to the game. "It's one of the few USGA events that we can handle from a facility standpoint. For us, it's an incredible fit."

The Walker Cup's first-ever appearance in Florida did require a schedule change from the event's traditional early September dates. "We're so appreciative of the R&A understanding that we need to hold the event in May," said Dunne. "When we were over at Royal Liv-

erpool two years ago in September (for a 15½–10½ USA victory), there were hurricanes in Florida at the time. They understood that, one, we could get hurricanes and two, we would definitely have very wet conditions. In May, we should have ideal conditions with really firm greens."

Located in Juno Beach and open from October through May, Seminole has always been first and foremost about golf. "We are unabashedly a golf club," Dunne said.

"If you don't love golf, it's not the right place for you. If you love golf but don't play quickly, it's not the right place for you. The only thing that keeps everybody together is the game itself and the aptitude of our membership. We have nine Walker Cup captains here. Not that it's a badge of honor, but it's telling."

As is the participation of the world's best players during the club's annual Pro-Member event, which features many PGA Tour stars. The club also hosts the country's top mid-amateurs every April in the George L. Coleman Invitational, named for a former club president.

Quality players have long flocked to Seminole (*see sidebar, left*). Byron Nelson and Gene Sarazen were early participants in the club's

(LEFT) BERT MORGAN/GETTY IMAGES



Amateur-Professional tournament, while Arnold Palmer was part of that event's winning team in 1961, the same year he won his first Open Championship. He later declared Seminole's par-5 15th one of his favorite holes in the world.

Founded by Edward F. Hutton – yes, that E.F. Hutton – in March 1929, Seminole Golf Club opened with 110 members who paid a \$500 initiation fee and \$300 in annual dues. Donald Ross designed the layout, deftly incorporating sand ridges that bracketed the property to the east and west into a routing with multiple angles that utilized the variable winds. Both the course and the distinctive clubhouse – designed by architect Marion Wyeth and featuring a pink stucco exterior – were completed that same year. But

the club's allure extends beyond its physical property.

Ben Crenshaw, who along with course-design partner Bill Coore enhanced the course during a recent three-year renovation project, says the feeling he gets at Seminole is palpable. "It represents some very dedicated golfers in a distinctly unique atmosphere," Crenshaw said. "It's one of the special places in golf in our country."

While wind will certainly play a role, Crenshaw points to other factors that may ultimately determine who captures the Cup.

"I know the greens will be firm and fast," he said. "They're very

elusive. You can hit a very good shot and many times it will just slip off the edge of a green and roll into a bunker. You have to have a good sand game, there's no doubt about it. The greens are just slippery to play to. They really call for precise

iron play, which goes right back to how you drive the ball as well. It's such an honest test of golf."

Dunne believes that Seminole has much

in common with many of the world's great courses, and in one particular respect the Old Course at St. Andrews. "I think it gets more difficult the closer you get to the hole," Dunne said. "You're going to miss greens at Seminole. We have what we call, 'Greens Visited in Regulation.' It's an ideal match-play course because it will be fairly reasonable in length, but you really have to have your wits about you to get the ball in the hole."

Almost a century after its opening, Seminole will briefly unveil itself on national TV for the second time in a year during the Walker Cup. The rare glimpse will complete the epiphany of sorts that Jimmy Dunne had that day long ago at Chicago Golf Club.

"Seminole has been a treasure in American golf," he said. "I felt like we should be more open about it. I'm not saying everybody would agree with that. But that's not what's important. What's important is we are doing something for amateur golf and for our country, and that's our responsibility." ♦

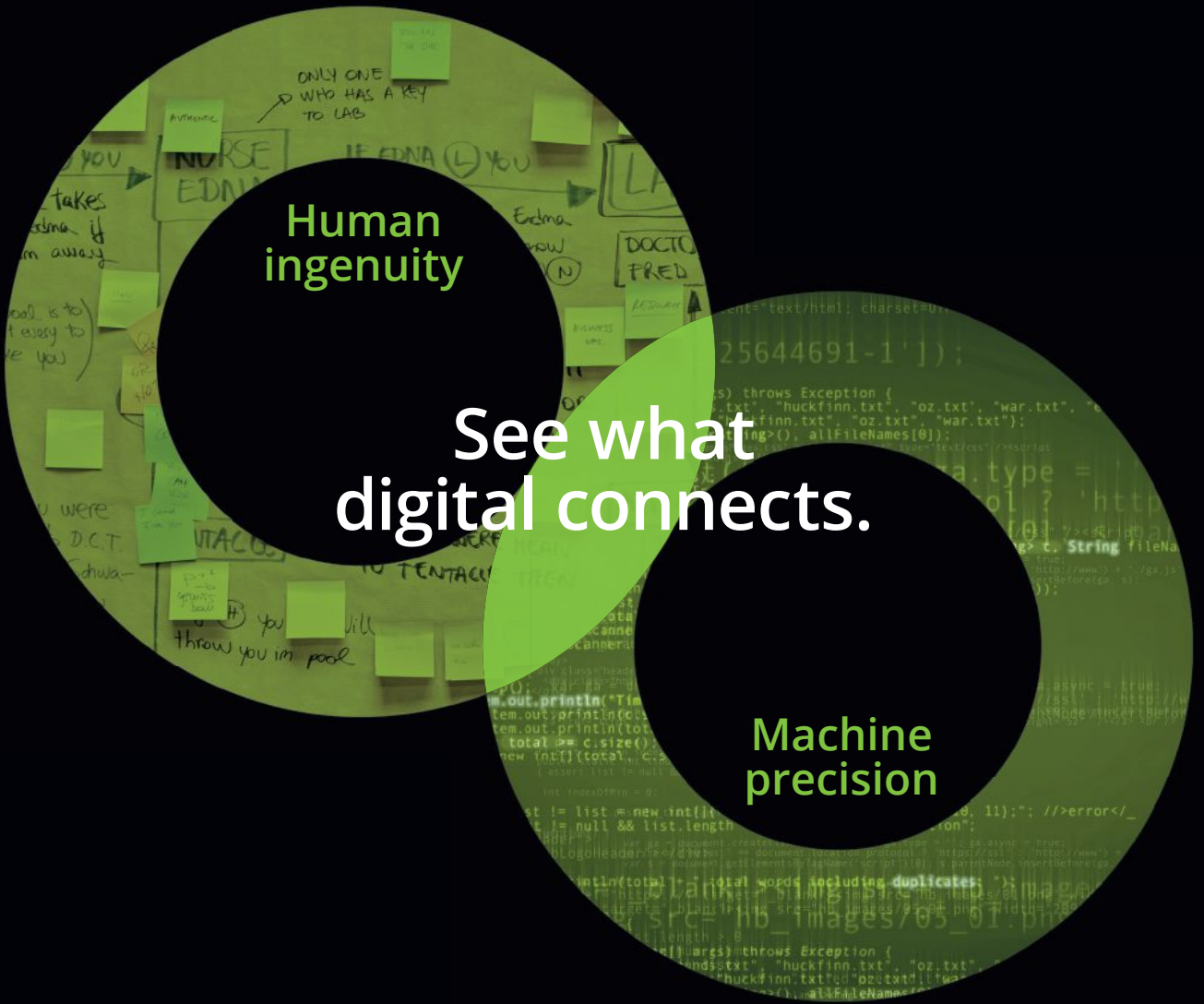


The dogleg-right opening hole offers a chance to get settled into a round at Seminole.

FROM THE
ARCHIVE
of the USGA Golf Museum & Library

Baseball trailblazer Jackie Robinson (left) is joined by former Brooklyn Dodgers teammate Don Newcombe for a round of golf in Miami in February 1958. Robinson became an avid golfer after his retirement in 1956 and was an outspoken critic of exclusionary policies in the game, often addressing those inequalities in his syndicated newspaper column.





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A large photograph of a golf course under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. In the upper left, a red paraglider is suspended in the air. In the foreground, four people are on a green grassy slope overlooking the ocean. From left to right: a man in a blue and white striped shirt and khaki pants stands looking out; a woman in a blue shirt and jeans stands with her hands on her hips; a man in a dark shirt and pants is in the middle of a golf swing; and a boy in a dark shirt and pants stands near a golf bag. The ocean is visible in the background under a clear blue sky.

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